United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Arizona Zone Entomology & Pathology | 2500 S. Pine Knoll Dr. Flagstaff, AZ 86001

File Code: 3410 Date: February 19,1998
Route To:

Subject: Functional Assistance to the Sedona Ranger District, Coconino National Forest, Diagnosis of cypress mortality on the Sedona Ranger District.

To: District Ranger
Sedona Ranger District
Coconino National Forest

On February 18, 1998, at the request of Dave Coryn, Jill Wilson, Entomologist, Bobbe Fitzgibbon, Entomologist, and Steve Dudley of the Arizona Zone Entomology and Pathology Office examined Arizona cypress mortality in the Schnebly Hill Road area. Numerous small pockets of mortality, consisting of trees of varying size were noted. Some branch dieback and top-kill was also observed. These pockets of mortality extend from the Forest Service boundary on lower Schnebly Hill Road up to Merry-Go-Round Rock.

Jill tentatively identified the bark beetles affecting these trees as Phloeosinus cristatus, commonly known as the cypress bark beetle. We suspect this mortality is related to the drought conditions which began during the 1995 field season. The drought probably predisposed the cypress trees to subsequent attack by P. cristatus. Since there are currently infested trees in the area there could be more attacks this summer. The potential for continued mortality in the area will probably depend upon how the beetles and their hosts respond to the moisture this winter. Often bark beetle outbreaks subside with the return of normal moisture.

The cypress bark beetle is found throughout the southwestern United States primarily in cypress. Junipers are also reported to be hosts, though we noted no juniper mortality in the area. Attacks for the genus in general are reported to occur in spring and summer with one to one and a half generations occurring per year. The beetles attack and reproduce in the lower bole and large limbs of their host, causing mortality. Branch dieback can be noted when young adults construct feeding tunnels in the pith of small living twigs. Twig kill can be quite conspicuous at times, particularly in ornamental situations. Direct control of this insect in forest situations is impractical, however keeping trees healthy can minimize attack.

If you have any questions concerning this letter or require further assistance please feel free to give us a call at (520) 556-2071. Thank you.

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cc.
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